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Occupational Employment and Wages in St. Louis — May 2016

Workers in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$23.19 in May 2016, below the nationwide average of \$23.86, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 13 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; life, physical, and social science; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Three occupational groups had wages that were significantly higher than their respective national averages, including construction and extraction, and production.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including office and administrative support; food preparation and serving related; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, seven groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including transportation and material moving; production; and education, training, and library. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	St. Louis	United States	St. Louis	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$23.86	\$23.19*	-3
Management	5.1	5.0	56.74	55.02*	-3
Business and financial operations	5.2	5.5*	36.09	35.13*	-3
Computer and mathematical	3.0	3.4*	42.25	39.87*	-6
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.6*	40.53	39.27	-3
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7	35.06	29.00*	-17
Community and social service	1.4	1.4	22.69	19.94*	-12
Legal	0.8	0.7	50.95	44.14*	-13
Education, training, and library	6.2	5.7*	26.21	26.72	2
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.4	28.07	24.26*	-14
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.6*	38.06	33.60*	-12
Healthcare support	2.9	3.0	14.65	13.68*	-7
Protective service	2.4	2.1*	22.03	20.72*	-6
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	9.9*	11.47	10.58*	-8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.2	13.47	12.89*	-4
Personal care and service	3.2	3.6*	12.74	11.74*	-8
Sales and related	10.4	10.1	19.50	19.14	-2
Office and administrative support	15.7	16.5*	17.91	17.82	-1
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1*	13.37	14.68*	10
Construction and extraction	4.0	3.9	23.51	28.00*	19
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.7*	22.45	22.59	1

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	St. Louis	United States	St. Louis	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Production	6.5	5.9*	17.88	18.62*	4
Transportation and material moving	6.9	6.1*	17.34	17.13	-1

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. St. Louis had 222,240 jobs in office and administrative support occupations, accounting for 16.5 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 15.7-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$17.82, compared to the national wage of \$17.91.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the office and administrative support group included secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (34,820), customer service representatives (28,070), and general office clerks (22,440). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$28.00 and \$26.14, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks (\$10.32) and receptionists and information clerks (\$12.33). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2016/may/oes_41180.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in several of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, brokerage clerks were employed at 2.9 times the national rate in St. Louis, and interviewers, except eligibility and loan, at 1.6 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks had a location quotient of 1.0 in St. Louis, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

Note

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2016 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, and November 2013. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 73 percent based on establishments and 69 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area included 8,051 establishments with a response rate of 61 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.htm.

The May 2016 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **St. Louis, Mo.-Ill. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis, St. Louis city, and Warren Counties of Missouri and Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair Counties of Illinois.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/mountain-plains. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request . Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and administrative support occupations.....	222,240	1.1	\$17.82	\$37,070
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers.....	12,260	0.9	28.00	58,230
Switchboard operators, including answering service	790	0.9	14.54	30,250
Bill and account collectors.....	4,500	1.6	15.71	32,670
Billing and posting clerks.....	5,260	1.1	17.83	37,080
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	15,080	1.0	19.06	39,650
Gaming cage workers	140	0.8	13.04	27,120
Payroll and timekeeping clerks.....	1,450	1.0	19.13	39,800
Procurement clerks	830	1.2	18.73	38,970
Tellers	4,770	1.0	13.19	27,440
Financial clerks, all other.....	510	1.5	18.90	39,310
Brokerage clerks	1,680	2.9	22.10	45,960
Correspondence clerks	160	2.4	17.00	35,360
Court, municipal, and license clerks.....	1,410	1.2	16.31	33,920
Credit authorizers, checkers, and clerks	360	1.0	18.28	38,030
Customer service representatives.....	28,070	1.1	17.25	35,880
Eligibility interviewers, government programs.....	1,220	0.9	19.46	40,490
File clerks	1,450	1.2	17.25	35,880
Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks	1,590	0.7	10.32	21,460
Interviewers, except eligibility and loan	2,900	1.6	15.00	31,210
Library assistants, clerical	990	1.1	12.39	25,760
Loan interviewers and clerks.....	2,630	1.2	19.34	40,220
New accounts clerks	530	1.3	15.83	32,920
Order clerks.....	1,460	0.9	16.21	33,710
Human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping	1,360	1.0	19.81	41,200
Receptionists and information clerks.....	7,610	0.8	12.33	25,640
Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks	720	0.5	17.41	36,210
Information and record clerks, all other	1,270	0.8	19.76	41,110
Cargo and freight agents.....	1,220	1.4	20.91	43,500
Couriers and messengers	530	0.8	14.65	30,460
Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers.....	860	0.9	19.86	41,310
Dispatchers, except police, fire, and ambulance.....	2,280	1.2	21.13	43,940
Meter readers, utilities	130	0.4	23.82	49,540
Postal service clerks.....	630	0.8	22.17	46,110
Postal service mail carriers	3,600	1.1	24.25	50,450
Postal service mail sorters, processors, and processing machine operators.....	1,390	1.3	23.49	48,850
Production, planning, and expediting clerks.....	2,550	0.8	24.48	50,930
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks.....	5,010	0.8	16.97	35,300
Stock clerks and order fillers	17,780	0.9	13.53	28,140
Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping.....	820	1.1	13.49	28,070
Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants	6,090	1.0	26.14	54,370
Legal secretaries	1,710	0.9	21.84	45,420
Medical secretaries	7,580	1.4	16.17	33,640
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive.....	34,820	1.6	16.90	35,140
Computer operators	990	2.2	20.75	43,160
Data entry keyers	1,860	1.0	14.68	30,530
Word processors and typists	430	0.7	16.09	33,460
Desktop publishers.....	130	1.0	25.02	52,050
Insurance claims and policy processing clerks	3,860	1.5	23.32	48,500

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Mail clerks and mail machine operators, except postal service	1,070	1.2	14.97	31,140
Office clerks, general.....	22,440	0.8	15.70	32,650
Office machine operators, except computer.....	540	1.0	15.44	32,120
Proofreaders and copy markers.....	50	0.5	18.01	37,460
Statistical assistants	150	1.5	19.52	40,600
Office and administrative support workers, all other	2,730	1.3	18.26	37,980

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_41180.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.